CONFERENCE OF THE COMMITTEE ON DISARMAMENT

CCD/281
9 March 1970

Original: ENGLISH

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Remarks by President Nixon on the entry into force of the Non-Proliferation Treaty; Washington, D.C., 5 March, 1970:

Mr. Secretary, your Excellencies, the Members of the Diplomatic Corps, Members of the Senate and the House, and our distinguished guests:

With the completion of this ceremony this Treaty is now in force and has become the Law of the Land.

Mr. Secretary, I would like to be permitted something beyond that formal statement which puts the Treaty in force.

I feel that on an occasion like this, an historic occasion, it is well to pay tribute to some of those, both in our government and in other governments, who have been responsible for the success in negotiating this Treaty.

First, in our own government, I should point out that the Treaty spans three administrations -- the Kennedy Administration, the Johnson Administration, and its completion in this Administration.

It was primarily negotiated during the Johnson Administration, and we very much regret that he was unable to attend this ceremony due to an illness, which I understand will be certainly temporary. We trust that if he is looking on television that he has seen this ceremony and the culmination of, I know, what was one of his major objectives during his administration, the ratification of the Non-Proliferation Treaty.

Having spoken of President Johnson and his administration, I think it is also appropriate to speak of the negotiating team. Seated at this table is William C. Foster. In speaking of him, I speak of all the men who worked with him.

I can speak with some experience in that respect. I remember on two occasions when I was in Geneva -- when I was out of office with no influence in the administration in Washington and very little influence in my own party -- Mr. Foster felt so strongly about this Treaty that he took much of his time to explain it and also to present the facts in an effective way as to why the Treaty was in the best interest of the United States, as well as the other nations involved. In other words, what was involved here was not only negotiation on his part and on the other members of his team, but a very effective and necessary program of education.

And for that long and at times very frustrating and at times almost, it seemed, impossible task, we can congratulate him and all the members of the Diplomatic Corps who worked as he did for that Treaty.

And on this occasion, too, I wish to pay respect to the Members of the House and the Senate that are here.

This Treaty indicates both the continuity of American foreign policy in its search for a just peace, and it also indicates its bipartisan character -- because without bipartisan support in the Senate, where the Treaty received the consent of the Senate, and bipartisan support in the House as well, this Treaty could not go into effect as it has today.

And, finally, I wish to pay tribute and express appreciation to all the representatives of the other governments that are present here today.

The fact that so many governments have brought this Treaty into effect is an indication of the immense desire that exists among all people in the world to reduce the danger of war and to find a way peacefully to settle our differences.

This is indeed an historic occasion. As I sit here today, I only hope that those of us who were fortunate enough to be present will look back one day and see that this was the first milestone on a road which led to reducing the danger of nuclear war and on a road which led to lasting peace among nations.

This milestone, as has already been indicated, results in non-proliferation of nuclear weapons to the extent that the nations participating in this ceremony and who have ratified the Treaty have indicated.

The next milestone we trust will be the limitation of nuclear weapons, the historic strategic arms limitation talks which will enter their second phase on April 16 in Vienna. And we note the fact that when Prime Minister Kosygin signed the Treaty in Moscow today, reference was made to those talks.

We trust that on April 16 the climate for progress in those talks will be good and that we can at some time in the future look forward to a ceremony in which we note the ratification of that historic treaty.

And then finally, of course, we trust that the third milestone will be continued progress in reducing the political tensions, the differences between governments

which make it necessary for us to consider that we must maintain armed forces to the degree that we maintain them.

This is the work of all of us, the work of the diplomats, the work of the men of peace and all of us I think can be so described today.

And so, Mr. Secretary, on this historic occasion, let us trust that we will look back and say that this was one of the first and major steps in that process in which the nations of the world moved from a period of confrontation to a period of negotiation and a period of lasting peace.